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**TITLE:**

THE RUSSO-JAPANESE WAR: HOW RUSSIA CREATED THE INSTRUMENT OF  
THEIR DEFEAT

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## **Executive Summary**

**Title:** The Russo-Japanese War: How Russia Created the Instrument of Their Defeat

**Author:** LCDR Michael Berry, United States Navy

**Thesis:** Poor Russian diplomatic practices and treatment of Japan provided Japan with the national will to start a war with Russia as well as justification and need to develop the ultimate instrument of Russia's defeat, the Japanese Navy.

**Discussion:** Russia expanded into East Asia with flagrant disregard for the interests and concerns of Japan and the ramifications of their actions. Moreover, Russia failed to conduct diplomatic relations with Japan in good faith which added to historical tensions between the two belligerents. Russian and Japanese imperialist aspirations came into conflict from the onset of Russia's entry into the Far East in 1860. Japan repeatedly attempted to negotiate with Russia to no avail. The Sino-Japanese War was caused by Japan's fear of Russian expansion into Korea. With the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Russia robbed Japan of what it had rightfully won. War could have been averted had Russia conducted further diplomatic negotiations in good faith. However, Russia continued to underestimate Japan and expanded into Korea. Japan exhausted all diplomatic efforts to resolve the disputes over Manchuria and Korea.

**Conclusion:** To protect itself from the Russian threat, Japan embarked on a military modernization program, with a specific emphasis on the navy. Japan felt it had no other recourse but war to protect its independence. Ultimately, it would be the Japanese Navy's decisive victory at the Battle of Tsushima that defeated the Russians and forced them to negotiate for peace.

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*Preface*

I initially chose this topic to gain a better understanding of how Japan was able to rise from seclusion in the 1850's and develop a military capable of defeating a western power by 1904. I was intrigued by the commonly held notion that the defeat of Russia was such a surprise. Additionally, I wondered what the precise causes of the war were. As Clausewitz states that wars are started by people's emotions being enraged toward the achievement of a political goal, I wondered if the war was started over a dispute regarding Manchuria and Korea or if there was more to the story. As I continued my research, it became apparent to me that Russia seemed to have picked an ill-advised fight. They pushed into Manchuria and then Korea knowing they were antagonizing Japan. My hope is that reading this paper will serve as a cautionary tale for those looking to expand their horizons at the expense of another party with contradicting interests to not underestimate their rival. Additionally, a clear, unbiased assessment of an enemy needs to be done prior to the commencement of any course of action. Russia failed to do this and the results were catastrophic.

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## INTRODUCTION

The Russo-Japanese War changed the balance of power in the Pacific and elevated Japan to the status of a first tier power. Russian expansion into the Far East came into direct conflict with Japanese ambitions from the onset. This conflict, coupled with Russian contemptuous diplomatic dealings with Japan, started the two nations along the path to war. Russian expansion began to advance into Manchuria and Korea at Japan's direct expense. As diplomacy was failing, Japan began a military modernization program, specifically focusing on naval modernization aided by Britain, which would allow it to counter Russian expansion. Exhausting all diplomatic efforts and perceiving no other recourse, Japan opted for war. Understanding that victory was far from guaranteed, Japan also was fully cognizant that inaction would have allowed Russia to solidify its position to the extent that subjugation of Japan would have been a definite. Initially, the war went well for Japan as their ground forces pushed the Russians back to and out of Mukden (See Appendix A). Although Mukden was a tactical victory, the Japanese Army had culminated and clandestinely explored the possibility of the peace with the US acting as a mediator. The Battle of Tsushima provided Japan with the decisive victory it needed to force Russia to the negotiating table from a position of strength (See Appendix B). Due to its dishonest and contemptuous imperialistic and diplomatic interactions with Japan, Russia provided for the creation of the instrument of its destruction, the creation of a Japanese Navy capable of conducting and winning engagements with a Western power and the Japanese national will for war.

## JAPAN'S RISE FROM SECLUSION

Japan discarded its seclusion policy in the 1850's only to find itself relegated to the position of a second tier power. As a result, Japan was forced to make concessions that no Western power would have made to another Western power.<sup>1</sup> With the restoration of the Emperor Meiji, following the conclusion of the War of the Restoration in June 1869, Japan began absorbing and implementing Western technological and societal changes to catch up with the first tier powers. As a result of their commitment toward "progress", in 1894 Britain signed a new, more equitable treaty. Other nations followed suit and more than 40 years of injustice and inequity had been put to an end<sup>2</sup> and Japan was on its way to becoming a first tier power, or so it appeared to the Japanese.

## **BEGINNING OF TENSION BETWEEN RUSSIA AND JAPAN**

### **Russian Seizure of Tsushima Island**

At the nascent stages of their relationship, Russia and Japan's imperialist ambitions were on a collision course that would ultimately result in war. Russia's entry into the Far East began in earnest about a week after Britain and France departed Peking in November 1860.<sup>3</sup> Russian expansion into China came into direct conflict with Japan from its onset. As Japan controlled the Sea of Japan and the entrances to the Pacific through which Russian ships would have to pass, "no sooner did the remote but certain pressure from the expanding northern Power being to be felt in Japan than in 1861."<sup>4</sup> Russia invaded the island of Tsushima in 1861 as a means to gain access to the Pacific. Their victory would be short lived as British intervention would force them to cede their gains back to Japan. As a result of this Russian aggression, "the seeds of anti-Russian loathing were sown in the Japanese minds."<sup>5</sup> Russia's seizure of Tsushima Island was the

first of many diplomatic and military slights that would cause a rise in anti-Russian sentiment throughout Japan.

### **Dispute Over Sakhalin**

Japan regarded Sakhalin as its possession, largely due to the southern portion being inhabited by the Japanese Ainu tribe.<sup>6</sup> Russia claimed Sakhalin as theirs. Although their claims lacked any validity, "they did lead to a tenuous partition, establishing the Russians in the north and Japanese in the south."<sup>7</sup> In 1875, Japan would surrender its rights to Sakhalin in return for the Kurile Island chain, which practically already belonged to Japan. This event had two points of significance. First, this move brought Russia closer to Japan, which increased the Japanese perception of a Russian threat and anti-Russian sentiment in Japan. The loss of face and shame that resulted from this surrender, "unavoidable though it was, sank deep into the hearts of the Samurai, and in the minds of the Japanese statesman dread of Russia grew stronger."<sup>8</sup> Second, this foreshadowed further Russian intervention into the Far East "for she could hardly be expected to be satisfied with her naval headquarters at Vladivostok."<sup>9</sup> With Vladivostok unusable during the winter months, Russian naval ships had to spend the winter in the "safety" of Japanese harbors. This arrangement would be far from acceptable as Russian imperialist ambitions were in direct conflict with Japanese imperialist ambitions. Japan rightfully assessed that Russia would continue its expansion into Manchuria in search of a warm water port. This premise contributed directly to three other events that would in turn lead to the Russo-Japanese War, namely, Japan's entrance into Korea, Russian intervention into negotiations ending the Sino-Japanese War, and the further Russian expansion into Manchuria and Korea.

## **KOREAN INTERVENTION AND THE SINO-JAPANESE WAR**

As the Russian position in the Pacific grew stronger, specifically following their acquisition of Sakhalin, Japan understood they would have to prevent the inevitable Russian expansion into China and/or Korea. China was unable to protect its domestic interests, and seemed to be unable to protest its foreign interests. Although China maintained suzerainty over Korea, "the task of keeping that dependency inviolate was beyond her strength."<sup>10</sup> As a result, Japan asserted itself into the internal affairs of Korea, under the premise of a need for stability in the "corrupt, bankrupt, feudal and defenseless kingdom"<sup>11</sup> to protect Japan's economic interests. Korean instability and Sino-Japanese disagreement on how to provide stability in Korea resulted in the Sino-Japanese War (See Appendix C). The war lasted only eight months (September 15, 1894 to March 30, 1895) and Japan achieved an overwhelming victory. Japan's imperialist conquest would be tainted as it came into conflict with Russian aspirations.

## **THE "HUMILIATION" OF THE TREATY OF SHIMONOSEKI**

Russian intervention into the Treaty of Shimonoseki hastened Russo-Japanese relations towards an inevitable war. Japan seemed to be on the verge of breaking out of its second tier status and assuming its places in the ranks of the World powers with their overwhelming defeat of the Chinese. China made huge concessions to Japan with the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Signed in April 1895, the treaty mandated that:

China renounce claims to suzerainty over Korea, pay a large indemnity, cede Taiwan, lease of Liaotung peninsula in south Manchuria (the key to land sea routes between Korea and Peking), and to promise a commercial treaty, putting Japan on equal footing with the western powers in China's foreign trade.<sup>12</sup>

The significance of the treaty was not lost Russia, which was in the process of expanding into eastern Asia and its potential impact of the Japanese gains could have had

on their expansionist plans.<sup>13</sup> Russia wished to acquire the Chinese warm water port of Port Arthur to allow them to conduct maritime operations in the winter months. If the treaty stood, a rising Japan would have been standing directly in the way of its imperialist goals. Russia was concerned that it did not have adequate military force in the Far East to dictate revision of the terms for the cessation of the war as their military forces in the area had not been strengthened and consolidated.<sup>14</sup> On 20 April, 1895, Russia, France and Germany, known as the Triple Intervention, “suggested” that Japan forgo its claim to territories on the Chinese mainland as its retention would have threatened the stability of the Far East. In return for their compliance, China paid a large indemnity to Japan. The Japanese cost of the war was estimated at 232.6 million yen and the indemnity totaled 4,700 million yen.<sup>15</sup>

Japan was forced to consent to the overwhelming might of the European powers. The original treaty between Japan and China, prior to the Triple Intervention was published in Japanese newspapers with an Imperial decree, countersigned by all of the Ministers of the Japanese Cabinet, which explained why Japan had ceded the fruits of its victory paid for with the blood of its valiant citizens. The decree announced “a desire to insure a permanent repose of the Orient had compelled Japan to go to war, and that the same desire had now prompted the three Powers to tender to Japan their present friendly counsel” which the Emperor accepted in the name of Peace.<sup>16</sup> The Japanese public was humiliated at having to acquiesce to the demands of foreign powers into Asiatic affairs.<sup>17</sup> All of the progress that had been made since the Meiji restoration seemed to have disappeared with one Imperial decree. Again Japan was subjected to unfair treaties due to their inability to compete militarily with the Western powers. Additionally, their

imperialist ambitions were derailed by Russian, as well as French and German, ambitions. At this time, Russia and Japan were firmly headed down the path to war.

### **TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY**

The initial impetus for the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway was Russia's need to revitalize the port of Vladivostok and the surrounding Russian colony.<sup>18</sup> Construction began on May 31, 1891. As Russia continued to expand into Manchuria, the railway became a military necessity. Russia needed a way to transport large numbers of troops and supplies to the region to protect its interests (specifically a warm water port). It became readily apparent that "to Russia a southern expansion toward an ice-free outlet was a necessity"<sup>19</sup>

The manner in which Russia obtained the rights to build the railway further inflamed Russo-Japanese tensions. On 27 March, 1896, the *North China Daily News* reported that Russia and China had signed a treaty forming a defensive alliance that same year. Japan was astonished by the report as they had been assured by St. Petersburg on 16 March that no treaty existed. Russia continued to negotiate with Japan in bad faith.

Russo-Japanese relations deteriorated further with the signing of a Russo-Sino treaty at the Cassini Convention on 30 September, 1896. The treaty, granted Russia railway rights in Manchuria, use of Chinese ports on the Chinese littoral and justification for Russian troops to remain in Manchuria (See Appendix D). The construction of the railway further provided Japan with the "need" to go to war. As the railway was "hugely expensive, with no economic justification, and with the eastern terminus ending at Vladivostok the Japanese had good cause to feel threatened."<sup>20</sup>

## **RUSSIA TAKES PORT ARTHUR**

The imperialist ambitions of the potential belligerents came into direct conflict with Russia's acquisition of Port Arthur. China was unable to meet the economic requirements of the treaty signed at the Cassini Convention. Russia stepped in to "assist" China in meeting their obligation. In exchange, China and Russia signed a 25-year lease of Port Arthur and its surrounding area on March 15, 1898. This lease worsened Russo-Japanese tensions as "the Russian delight at obtaining a warm-water port at last was only equaled by the chagrin of the Japanese at seeing what they had captured by force of arms possessed by their most dangerous rival."<sup>21</sup> In addition, adding insult "to injury in the Japanese eyes- (Russia) secured mining concessions in Manchuria"<sup>22</sup> and rights to construct a railway linking the port with the Trans-Siberian Railway. While other European powers descended upon China like vultures that had been circling since the beginning of the war,<sup>23</sup> (See Appendix E) Japan was most threatened by Russia. All of Japan's expansionist desires were usurped by Russian advances. Additionally, Russia had acquired the prizes that Japan had won, in the Sino-Japanese War, and were forced to surrender as a result of Russian diplomatic maneuvering.

## **BOXER REBELLION AND RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF MANCHURIA**

Russia thwarted any Japanese designs on Manchuria with their occupation of the region following the Boxer Rebellion. Japan, Russia, France, Germany, Britain, and the United States all sent troops into China in response to the Boxer Rebellion in 1901. Following the restoration of order, European powers began to consolidate their interests by way of bilateral alliances.<sup>24</sup> Britain concerned with Russian advances and



strengthening position in East Asia, signed an alliance with Japan on 30 January 1902. International tensions increased as “with the movement of Russia there traveled from Europe to East Asia her sympathetic relations with France, while against this practical alliance stood the increasing common interests and sympathies of Japan, Great Britain, and the United States.”<sup>25</sup> The agreement would be critical to Japan’s future naval modernization (See Appendix F).

Russia took advantage of the rebellion to forcibly take all of Manchuria. Mukden, the capital of Manchuria, “was occupied on the 30<sup>th</sup> September [sic], by which date the whole country was practically in the hands of the Russians.”<sup>26</sup> Initially indicating a desire to evacuate Manchuria once Russian interests were protected, Russia placed a list of demands upon China for its evacuation (See Appendix G). With these demands Russia made it clear that it would not, as it had previously stated in acknowledgement of the Anglo-German Agreement of 16 October 1900, respect the independence of China.

It should be remembered that Russia herself persistently maintained that the principle of the integrity of China applied also to Manchuria, and she would have hardly antagonized other Powers had she expressed an equally clear adhesion to the principle of the open door, and made efforts to carry out pledges regarding both principles.<sup>27</sup> (See Appendix H)

## **CONFLICT OVER KOREA**

The Russo-Japanese conflict in respect to Korea was rooted in the cause of the Sino-Japanese War, the instability of the Korean government. On October 8, 1895, the Korean Queen was assassinated and the King sought refuge in the Russian Embassy, where he stayed for two years. Russia strengthened its forces in Korea to which Japan reciprocated. Russia and Japan reached an agreement that was to respect the independence of Korea, a strategic concern for Japan, and called for the withdrawal of

troops from the Korean peninsula (See Appendix I). The treaty calmed Russo-Japanese tensions and a period of relative peace existed between the two potential belligerents for almost a decade.<sup>28</sup> Again, Russia would violate its agreement and demonstrate utter contempt for the interests, concerns and military capabilities of Japan.

A few years after this agreement, Russia reasserted its interests in Korea. A Russo-Korean bank was formed in 1897. Russia also received a timber cutting contract along the Yalu River, run by a retired soldier and worked by armed ex-soldiers, in April 1903. To protect its interests, Russia acquired land along the Yalu, established a base at Yongnampo, 15 miles from the mouth of the Yalu (See Figure 2) and moved troops into the region. At the same time, Port Arthur was stocked with supplies and a large number of Russian troops moved toward Korea. The Russian enterprise was designed to maintain its influence in Korean affairs while simultaneously preventing others from intervening.<sup>29</sup>

#### **RUSSIAN MOTIVATION AND DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS**

Russian expansion into the Far East was not as much economically based as it was conducted to satisfy the narcissistic impulses of Czar Nicholas II. Prior to Russia's expansion into Manchuria, Russia suffered a number of setbacks in its pursuit of a warm water port. As Russia was "thwarted in the Mediterranean, unable to dominate the Kurds and Turks, squeezed south by the inhospitability of Siberia, they found in the seventeenth century their new lebensraum at Kamchatka."<sup>30</sup> Nicholas hungered for redemption and found it in his conquest of Manchuria.<sup>31</sup> Where he had failed in Europe and in the Middle East, he attempted to succeed in Manchuria. Similarly, Russian intervention into Korean affairs was also derived from Nicholas's need for vindication and conquest. "Drunk" with success in Manchuria, he was easily persuaded by advisors to ignore

agreements with Japan over the sovereignty of Korea and agitate Japan for very little financial gain. Nicholas, flushed by his first success, increasingly saw the Far East as the means to satisfy his ambitions as well as take attention away from the current domestic difficulties Russia was experiencing.<sup>32</sup> Sergei Witte, Russian Finance Minister prior to the Russo-Japanese War and a major part of the Russian delegation negotiating peace, disagreed with Russia's reentry into Korean affairs. Writing after the war, Witte stated that "if we (Russia) had faithfully adhered to the spirit of this agreement...there is no doubt that more or less permanent peaceful relations would have been established between Japan and Russia."<sup>33</sup> Witte understood the correlation between industrial strength and political power, Nicholas "believed simply in his God-given rights in the Far East."<sup>34</sup> Where Witte desired to avoid war with Japan, Nicholas welcomed a war.

Expansion into the Far East addressed a strategic need for Russia. Kamchatka was only a partial answer to meeting their needs to expand trade as the winter months made it unusable. Hence, Russia needed to find a warm water port. Although this may have justified expansion into Manchuria, expansion into Korea, with its high potential cost and low economic benefit, was done purely to soothe Nicholas' bruised ego. It should be noted that Russian expansion into the Far East began as early as the 16th century under Ivan IV. Yet, it was Nicholas who had a greater focus on Far East expansion to divert attention away from Russian domestic difficulties.

Japan began diplomatic negotiations with Russia on 28 July 1903 as it became clear that Russia had no intentions of honoring its previous agreements in respect to Manchuria or Korea. Russia treated Japan "in a high-handed, contemptuous and arbitrary manner."<sup>35</sup> Diplomatic stalling, by Russia, ensued and Japan severed diplomatic

negotiations by withdrawing its Ambassador for St. Petersburg on February 6, 1904 (See Appendix J).

## **JAPANESE NAVY MODERNIZATION**

### **Need to Modernize**

The Sino-Japanese War, caused by Russian expansion, provided the Japanese navy with the motivation and justification to develop a navy capable of defeating a Western power. Following the end of the war and resultant "humiliation" of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan came to the realization that if it wanted to be treated diplomatically as an equal it had to build a military that was equal to that of the Western powers.

It became clear to her as daylight that the new position she had acquired in the Orient by her victory over China could be maintained, and even her independence must be guarded, only by an armament powerful enough to give her a voice among the first powers of the world.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, the Triple Intervention caused Japan to realize "that a junction of hostile Western battle fleets in East Asian waters was a possibility."<sup>37</sup> Therefore, to counter Russian expansion and protect itself from foreign fleets, Japan had to overhaul its naval doctrine and force structure. Russian acquisition of Port Arthur, its dealings in Manchuria and intervention into Korean affairs provided further credence to what Japanese Naval Officers had began advocating since the Treaty of Shimonoseki, that the development of "a navy capable of meeting the navy of Russia was essential to her (Japan's) security."<sup>38</sup>

Japanese sea power, in the form destroyed two Russian Fleets, was borne not out of the Mahanian need for security of sea lines of communication as much as from a Nelsonian theory of finding and destroying the enemy's fleet<sup>39</sup> (See Appendix K).

Mahan's principal theory of sea power stated "control of maritime commerce through command of the sea is the primary function of navies"<sup>40</sup> Establishing naval superiority was a prerequisite for further operations, such as transporting troops across the sea while a foreign navy is still a viable threat. During the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese Navy, following along with Mahan's beliefs, primarily provided security for Japanese troop transports. Conversely, Japan's first move in the Russo-Japanese War, defied Mahan as the landing at Chemulpo was conducted in the face of an "equal" naval force.<sup>41</sup> Nelson believed a navy's sole task was to defeat the enemy's navy regardless of the risk to his fleet.<sup>42</sup> Due to the Russian threat, the Japanese Navy adopted a more offensive mindset. This mindset led them to destroy the Russian Fleet at Tsushima.

### **Command and Control**

To foster this more offensive mindset, Japan modified the existing command structure of the Japanese military. During the war, the navy was subordinate to the Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ), commanded by an army general. Initially, the Japanese Navy was directed to do little more than "was necessary to guarantee the unimpeded progress of their land forces."<sup>43</sup> Clan rivalry may have played a part in the relegation of the Japanese Navy to that of a "support service."<sup>44</sup> Japanese naval officers were of the opinion that their destruction of the Peiyang Fleet and "concomitant command of the sea," which allowed the army to land on China's coast, was the decisive role in the conflict.<sup>45</sup> Following the conclusion of the war and after much debate, the navy was able to overcome the "clan rivalry" and successfully lobbied for a reorganization of the Imperial General Headquarters. Being independent of the army, the navy was able to debate with the army as equals over the "nation's grand strategy, for

military spending, and for public enthusiasm and support.”<sup>46</sup> They were “free” to develop their own mission and determine the composition and capabilities of their fleet.

### **Expanding Mission**

As Japan’s expansionist dreams were countered by those of Russia, the Japanese Navy was able to expand its “strategic horizons”. The seizure and occupation of Formosa (Taiwan) and the Pescadores (Peng-hu) Islands (See Figure 3) in the final months of the war allowed for this expansion of the navy’s mission.<sup>47</sup> Prior to this, the main mission of the navy was to defend the Japanese coastline and provide support to the army. With annexation of these islands under the Treaty of Shimonoseki, Japan acquired one of the Mahanian requisites for imperialism, colonial naval bases (See Appendix L).<sup>48</sup> Japanese strategy for imperial conquest previously had focused on expanding east and north into Manchuria and Korea. Establishing naval bases to the south opened the door for Japanese expansion into Southern China, Southeast Asia, and the South Pacific.<sup>49</sup> The possibility of expanding into the south was more significant in respect to providing justification for an increase in the navy’s budget and mission than actual acquisition of colonial prizes as most of the territory to the south was either controlled by or under the influence of Western powers.<sup>50</sup> As such, Japan continued to focus its colonial aspirations to the north. Russo-Japanese imperialist ambitions continued to remain mutually exclusive.

### **Changing Naval Doctrine**

In addition to the new possibilities for the employment of the navy, Japan gained the confidence to change their naval doctrine. In the Sino-Japanese War, the Japanese Navy defeated a numerically superior Chinese Navy. At the beginning of the war, China

had 65 large naval vessels and 43 torpedo boats divided among its four fleets. At the onset of the war, China's "northern fleet alone was comparable to that of the Japanese, with 14 warships."<sup>51</sup> Defeating a numerically superior navy demonstrated the potential lethality of Japanese Naval power. With this success, the Japanese Navy gained the confidence to modify its doctrine.

The Japanese Navy, initially based its naval doctrine and tactics on those produced and used by Western powers, specifically those of Mahan. Japan modified its doctrine and tactics to facilitate a more offensive posture. The new doctrine relied heavily on catchphrases such as "using a few to conquer many" and "fight the enemy on sight" which were as much psychological as they were tactical.<sup>52</sup> Additionally, "a body of professional doctrine began to emerge, shaped by a nucleus of incisive, imaginative, and informed young officers"<sup>53</sup> that prepared the navy to battle its potential enemies at sea (Russia) and with domestic enemies (the Japanese Army).

### **Anglo-Japanese Alliance**

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 provided Japan with the means to modernize their navy (See Appendix F). Japan benefited by obtaining access to British Naval ships, equipment and training. Japan used the profit from the Treaty of Shimonoseki for "a large contract placed on British yards for the most modern warships available."<sup>54</sup> As Japan modernized and strengthened its navy, Russia did so as well. In 1903, the Russian Far East Navy closed the gap in comparison to the Japanese Navy. Japan planned to build three more battleships and three more armored cruisers. Construction on these warships began just as Russo-Japanese tensions worsened in autumn 1903.<sup>55</sup> Japan, with British assistance, bought two Italian made battleships, the

*Kasuga* and *Nisshin*. British officers sailed the ships to Japan. With this act, Japan "regained its position as the world's fourth largest naval power"<sup>56</sup> right on the eve of the outbreak of the war. The superior quality of Japan's warships was the most significant factor leading to their victory at sea in the Russo-Japanese War.<sup>57</sup> Britain gained an ally that would assist in countering Russian, French and German expansion into East Asia. Britain desired an ally in the region as Russia and France agreed to expand their alliance to be activated in the event of a war with Britain.<sup>58</sup> As Russo-Japanese imperialist ambitions collided and Britain desired to counter rising Russian influence in East Asia, Japan and Britain formed a mutually beneficial relationship founded on the conflicts of Russo-Japanese imperialist ambitions.

#### NAVAL COMPARISON

Japan's naval expansion, completed at the end 1902, forced the Russians to react to restore the maritime balance of power. At the end of 1902, the Russian Far Eastern Fleet was comprised of seven battleships, four armored, five first-class and two-third class cruisers, 25 destroyers, 17 torpedo boats and 10 sloops and gunboats. Although this represented a comparable fleet on paper, the Japanese Fleet in reality was more capable and modern. Built in Britain, their six first-class battleships and eight first-class armored cruisers were more modern and faster than their Russian counterparts. The Japanese "battleships *Fuji* and *Yashima*, launched in England in 1896, were the fastest and most heavily armored battleships in the world when they were built."<sup>59</sup> The Japanese flagship, *Mikasa*, "was the biggest and most powerful of the world's battleships."<sup>60</sup> Britain had also constructed 15 of Japan's 19 destroyers. Realizing they had fallen behind, Russia increased its Far East Fleet and moved more troops into Manchuria. These actions were



perceived as preparations for war. Russia made a lot of progress and "by February 1904, the position so far as Russia was concerned was much more favorable."<sup>61</sup>

### **WAS JAPAN'S MILITARY BUILDUP INEVITABLE?**

Japan's naval buildup may not have come about had it not been for the "imminent" threat posed by Russia. Japanese Navy Minister Yamamoto was not initially concerned with the Russian threat and probably would have been content focusing the Japanese Navy's modernization efforts on a more Mahanian-style (use the navy to protect sea lines of communication and trade) navy in lieu of the more Nelsonian-style navy (destroy the enemy's fleet at all costs) they constructed<sup>62</sup> (See Appendix K). The level of modernization and number of ships was also directly influenced by the Russian threat. As previously stated, Japan was aware that to be treated like a World power it had to acquire a world class navy. Similarly, Japan needed a strong navy to fulfill a prerequisite for being a world power, colonial expansion.<sup>63</sup> Additionally, as Russia drew closer to Japan, to protect its national security and interests, Japan would need a strong navy. Therefore, Russia provided Japan with the need for a strong navy.

### **WAR VERSUS DIPLOMACY**

Throughout the negotiations in 1903 and early 1904, Japan struggled to reach a consensus on the best course of action in regards to Russian intransigence towards their diplomatic overtures. In an attempt to build consensus for war, on June 17, 1903, the Japanese Army drafted a memo soliciting the support of the Japanese Navy for war prior to meeting with the emperor. The Navy minister, Admiral Yamamoto did not view Korea as being vital to Japan's prosperity. Yamamoto responded to the army by stating, "What if Korea is lost to Japan? It will suffice if Japan secures her own island

territories.”<sup>64</sup> The army submitted their opinion without the support of the navy on 22 June, 1903. The Japanese government continued to be divided on the issue of war with Russia. Foreign Minister Jutaro Komura and War Minister Taro Katsura favored negotiations over war. Yet, they were fully aware that war with Russia might have been unavoidable. Prior to a conference on the issue in the emperor’s presence on 23 June, Komura stated, “It will be very hard to get Russia to agree to such a deal so it is essential that, before embarking on negotiations, we are fully determined to secure our objective regardless of the ultimate sacrifice.”<sup>65</sup> A joint resolution was agreed upon, stating that Japan would respect Russia’s influence in Manchuria for reciprocal rights for Japan in Korea. (See Appendix M). Japan’s resolve was unyielding, yet they were willing to negotiate with Russia. Russia on the other hand, was not willing to negotiate, due mainly for their contemptuous view of Japan as well as Russia’s considerable underestimation of the Japanese military.

#### **RUSSIAN OPINIONS ON AND UNDERESTIMATION OF WAR WITH JAPAN**

Russia was divided on the issue of war with Japan as well. While the majority of the Russian leadership viewed Japan as merely speed bump on their imperialist drive, three prominent Russian leaders took a more cautious stance. Finance Minister Sergei Witte, Defense Minister General Aleksei Kuropatkin and Foreign Minister Count V.N. Lamsdorf were not in favor of Russian enterprises in Korea, specifically due to the probability of antagonizing Japan. The three opponents to the Korean enterprise “could see little merit in going out of their way to antagonize the Japanese whose hostility to the project was already clear, for such a small commercial return in northern Korea.”<sup>66</sup>

Czar Nicholas despised and underestimated the Japanese. He was in the habit of referring to them even in official documents as “macoes”, Russian slang for monkeys.<sup>67</sup> This racist outlook was prevalent in Russia and permeated into official Russian assessments of Japanese capabilities. Colonel P.S. Vannovskii, the military attaché in Tokyo since 1900, believed that Japan’s military was inconsequential in respect to Russia. He reported to the Czar that their army was inferior to the weakest European armies and about a decade behind in its modernization efforts.<sup>68</sup> Another influential advisor to the Czar who favored war with Japan was General Alexand M. Bezobrazov. Bezobrazov manipulated his influence with the emperor to launch enterprises into Korea. While Russia was experiencing severe civil unrest due to poverty and hunger, exacerbated by the massive costs of Russian expansion into Korea/Manchuria, Bezobrazov favored more repression as reform could have interfered with his enterprises.<sup>69</sup> As such, he advised the Czar that Japan would not dare enter into a war with Russia and that a war might serve as a distraction to current Russian domestic economic problems.<sup>70</sup>

In light of Russia’s civil unrest and economic woes, Russia should not have continued towards war with Japan. Nicholas may have believed that a war could serve as a much needed distraction that could “stem the tide of revolution.”<sup>71</sup> Some argue that Russia was not prepared to go to war with Japan (See Appendix N). This assessment may have been reached by Nicholas if an honest, unbiased evaluation of Japan’s military capabilities had been conducted. Russia’s racism and belief in the superiority of European over Asiatic military power led it to the conclusion that Japan would not be able to compete with Russia. The number of Japanese soldiers was underestimated,

probably based on Vannoviskii's less than complimentary analysis. Once the war began, Vannoviskii continued to underestimate Japan's military. Once hostilities commenced, he stated, "The question of immediate interest is not whether we may expect anything extraordinary from Japanese generals, but whether the talent of Russian generals comes up to the average of the ordinary."<sup>72</sup> Russian generals also underestimated the capabilities of Japan. One Russian general stated, "We will only have to throw our caps at them and they will run away."<sup>73</sup> Similarly, although the Russian Navy, on paper, was comparable to that of the Japanese, Japan's navy was more capable and more modern (See Appendix O). Russia's underestimation of Japan prevented Russia from seeing Japan for the threat they were. Due to this error, they continued their practice of diplomatic "bullying" and gave Japan no other recourse but to resort to war. This error proved to be costly for Russia. Not only did it push for a war it was not ready for, but it also cost them the war.

## **WILL OF THE PEOPLE**

Through its imperialist moves into Manchuria and Korea and inequitable diplomatic, Russia provided Japan with the justification and national will for war. Japan did not simply go to war to avenge past diplomatic inequalities forced upon her by Russia. It is true that Japan's economic future as well national security and independence truly were threatened by Russian moves. More importantly, Russia provided Japan with the hostile intent that is needed for a country to go to war. Clausewitz wrote, "Two different motives make men fight one another: hostile feelings and hostile intentions."<sup>74</sup> Japan felt that Russia was to blame for its continued relegation to second tier power status. Some state that Japan entered into a war with Russia solely for economic and

national security interests. Clausewitz also wrote, "It would be an obvious fallacy to imagine war between civilized peoples as resulting merely from a rational act on the part of the governments and to conceive of war."<sup>75</sup> For a nation to go to war effectively, it must have the will of the people. Japan has a long memory. The loss of face it suffered prior to the war burned deep within the hearts of many Japanese. Following the Treaty of Shimonoseki, there were several violent protests as Japanese sought a physical expression of their outrage and humiliation.

Japan's hatred for Russia consumed them, providing both of Clausewitz's motives that cause men to fight, hostile feelings and hostile intent. Japanese "prisons began to fill with enraged Japanese patriots, newspapers were suspended and guards placed on printing presses."<sup>76</sup> Prior to the commencement of hostilities a force of Japanese volunteers in Peking was raised to conduct suicide attacks on the Trans-Siberian Railway once hostilities commenced. As a result of their hatred of Russia, "to a man the Japanese community responded...some who were turned away committed suicide because they were not taken."<sup>77</sup> Even those who opposed the war abstained from any demonstrations once it came. The decision to go to war was not unanimous and "Japan had political malcontents, but with war each one became silent."<sup>78</sup> The will for war was created by Russia.

Once war came, Japan was relieved that the situation was "progressing" towards resolution. When the war started "the waiting ended and the tension relaxed. And Japan was glad-not glad to be at war, but glad to end the terrible strain, glad to know the worst at last."<sup>79</sup> The tension Japan felt over conflict with Russia was released as they went to

war. Japan restored its honor by defeating Russia and reestablished itself as a first-tier power.

## CONCLUSION

The Russo-Japanese War provided Japan with the means to elevate itself to the status of a world power. Every step of Russia's expansion into the Far East threatened Japan's national security. Russia viewed Japan as inferior and treated them accordingly in their diplomatic negotiations. As the Russian threat grew, Japan had to prepare to use military force to defend itself. The Sino-Japanese War and Treaty of Shimonoseki proved that Japan would only be able to ensure its survival through armed conflict. Russia failed to negotiate in good faith with Japan and provided the necessity and justification for Japanese military modernization. Russian diplomacy forced Japan to seek an ally to protect its interests. Forming an alliance with Britain provided Japan with the means to develop its navy into a force capable of defeating a western power. At every diplomatic turn, Russia demonstrated its contempt and underestimation of Japan's military strength. As a result, Russia provided Japan with the national will for war. With a capable military, the will for war and seeing no other recourse, Japan opted for war with Russia, whatever the cost. The Japanese Navy, modernized to counter the Russian threat, provided the decisive victory during the war at the Battle of Tsushima. Had Russia treated Japan as an equal, it is unknown if Japan would have went to war with Russia. What is known is that Russia, through its contemptuous and unequal diplomatic negotiations with Japan, started a war that they were not ready for and would end up losing.

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Notes

<sup>1</sup> R.H.P. Mason and J.G. Caiger, A History of Japan, (Boston: Tuttle Publishing, 199), 264.

<sup>2</sup> Mason, 264-266. With their status in the pecking order dictated, the Western powers descended upon Japan to further their imperialist ambitions and in a race to be the first to exploit this new opportunity. Japan believed the only way it could be treated as an equal was to modernize to a level that it could compete with the Western powers. "The change from unthinking acceptance of traditional attitudes to deliberate espousal of new goals marked a decisive break with the past." One of the major goals of the Meiji was treaty revision. The Meiji focused on properly negotiating the revision of existing treaties as opposed to take the course of unilateral denunciation. "This showed its seriousness in abandoning the seclusion policy, and its commitment of Japan to open diplomacy and an appropriate place in the existing power system."

<sup>3</sup> Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 66. China ceded the eastern coast of Manchuria from the Amur River to the Korean frontier to Russia. Russia's Eastern Naval Headquarters was moved south from Nicolaisesk.

<sup>4</sup> Asakawa, 66.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 1.

<sup>6</sup> Connaughton, 1. The northern portion of Sakhalin was never settled due to its inhospitable weather.

<sup>7</sup> Connaughton, 2. Russia claimed rights to Sakhalin due to the right of discovery, occupancy by Siberians and finally due to the 1860 agreement with China.

<sup>8</sup> Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, The Russo-Japanese War, Part I, 2nd Edition (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), 8.

<sup>9</sup> Asakawa, 67.

<sup>10</sup> Historical, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Connaughton, 2.

<sup>12</sup> W.G. Beasley, The Japanese Experience: A Short History (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 232.

<sup>13</sup> Historical, 10.

<sup>14</sup> Connaughton, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Warner, Dennis and Peggy. The Tide at Sunrise (New York: Charterhouse, 1974), 59.

<sup>16</sup> Asakawa, 77.

<sup>17</sup> Connaughton, 7. Japan had a distaste and fury over this further example of regional bullying. "Prisons began to fill with enraged Japanese patriots, newspapers were suspended and guards placed on printing presses."

<sup>18</sup> Ian Nish, The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War (London: Longman Group Limited, 1985), 15.

<sup>19</sup> Asakawa, 68.

<sup>20</sup> Connaughton, 3.

<sup>21</sup> David Walder, The Short Victorious War: The Russo-Japanese Conflict 1904-05 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1973), 37.

<sup>22</sup> Beasley, 234.

<sup>23</sup> Warner, 119.

<sup>24</sup> Connaughton, 8.

<sup>25</sup> Asakawa, 78.

<sup>26</sup> Historical, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Asakawa, 165. The Anglo-German Agreement was signed October 16, 1900.

<sup>28</sup> David Walder, The Short Victorious War: The Russo-Japanese Conflict 1904-05 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1973), 37.

<sup>29</sup> Nish, The Origins, 155.

<sup>30</sup> Connaughton, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Warner, 122.

<sup>32</sup> Warner, 77.

<sup>33</sup> Warner, 123.

<sup>34</sup> Warner, 122.

- <sup>35</sup> Connaughton, 10.
- <sup>36</sup> Asakawa, 79.
- <sup>37</sup> David C. Evans and Mark R. Peattie, Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 65.
- <sup>38</sup> Richmond, 189.
- <sup>39</sup> Nish, "Japan", 78. "In the view of naval officers at the time, the object of holding sea power was not for the sake of protecting lines on communication for the sake of commerce, as Mahan considered, but was for the sake of destroying enemy fleets which came to attack Japan, and protecting Japan's coast."
- <sup>40</sup> Philip A. Crowl, "Alfred Thayer Mahan: The Naval Historian", in Makers of Modern Strategy: From Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age, edited by Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 455.
- <sup>41</sup> Jane, 89.
- <sup>42</sup> Alexander Kiralfy, "Japanese Naval Strategy", in Makers of Modern Strategy, edited by Edward Mead Earle (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 470.
- <sup>43</sup> Kiralfy, 470.
- <sup>44</sup> Ian Nish, "Japan and Sea Power", in Naval Power in the Twentieth Century, edited by N.A.M. Rodger (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), 78. In 1877-1878, the Satsuma, naval clan, rebelled against the empire. The naval rebellion was put down by the Japanese Army and the pecking order for national defense had been established.
- <sup>45</sup> Evans, 49.
- <sup>46</sup> Evans, 50.
- <sup>47</sup> Evans, 50.
- <sup>48</sup> Evans, 50.
- <sup>49</sup> Evans, 50.
- <sup>50</sup> Evans, 51.
- <sup>51</sup> Dennis and Peggy Warner, The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905 (New York: Charterhouse, 1974), 118.
- <sup>52</sup> Evans, 50.
- <sup>53</sup> Evans, 51.
- <sup>54</sup> Connaughton, 5-6.
- <sup>55</sup> Evans, 64.
- <sup>56</sup> Evans, 64.
- <sup>57</sup> Evans, 65.
- <sup>58</sup> Kiralfy, 44.
- <sup>59</sup> Warner, 176.
- <sup>60</sup> Warner, 177.
- <sup>61</sup> Warner, 176.
- <sup>62</sup> Nish, The Origins, 158.
- <sup>63</sup> Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History, (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1890), 25.
- <sup>64</sup> Nish, The Origins, 158.
- <sup>65</sup> Nish, The Origins, 159.
- <sup>66</sup> Nish, The Origins, 170.
- <sup>67</sup> Warner, 80.
- <sup>68</sup> Nish, The Origins, 168.
- <sup>69</sup> Nish, The Origins, 168.
- <sup>70</sup> Nish, The Origins, 168.
- <sup>71</sup> Connaughton, 11.
- <sup>72</sup> Military Correspondent of The Times, The War in the Far East 1904-1905, (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1905) 159.
- <sup>73</sup> Walder, 77.
- <sup>74</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 76.
- <sup>75</sup> Clausewitz, 76.
- <sup>76</sup> Connaughton, 5.



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<sup>77</sup> Warner, 186.

<sup>78</sup> Jane, 97.

<sup>79</sup> Connaughton, 11.

# Appendix A: Timeline of Events of Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905

<b>1904</b>	
13 Jan	Japan presents Russia with final draft treaty on Manchuria; Russia sends no reply
06 Feb	Japan recalls Ambassador from Chemulpo; Japanese being embarking at Sasebo
08 Feb	Japanese torpedo flotilla attack Russian ships; Four Japanese battalions arrive at Chemulpo
09 Feb	Togo attacks Port Arthur, objective changed to contain Russian fleet in harbour At Chemulpo, Russian ships attacked; two Japanese battalions begin march to Seoul Japan declares war on Russia
16 Feb	12 <sup>th</sup> Japanese Div disembarks at Chemulpo, begins march towards Yalu River
23 Feb	Korea agrees to allow Japanese troops to pass through country
06 Mar	Japanese bombard Vladivostok
08 Mar	Admiral Makarov become commander of Russian Far East Fleet
27 Mar	Gen Kuropatkin takes command of Russian Manchurian Army; Japanese Army continues marching towards the Yalu River
13 Apr	Makarov sends fleet to meet Togo, killed when flagship struck a mine
30 Apr	Japanese Army crosses the Yalu, Battle of the Yalu River begins
01 May	Russians withdraw, Japanese Army does not pursue
05 May	Japanese 2 <sup>nd</sup> Army lands SW of Pitzuwo, force sent astride railway and land communications of Port Arthur
14 May	2 Div of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Army sent to Port Arthur
16 May	Port Arthur is isolated
19 May	10 <sup>th</sup> Japanese Div lands at Takushan; Alexeiev orders Kuropatkin to relieve Port Arthur
26 May	Battle of Nanshan, Japan captures Chinchou; Russian mines cleared from Talien Bay; Dalny becomes base for 3 <sup>rd</sup> Japanese Army
06 Jun	Oyama orders 2 <sup>nd</sup> Japanese Army, via Fenshuiling Pass, and 4 <sup>th</sup> Japanese Army, via the Motienling Pass, to converge on Port Arthur as soon as possible
08 Jun	Battle of Hsiuyen – 10 <sup>th</sup> Japanese Army and a brigade of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Japanese Army converge and take Hsiuyen
13 Jun	2 <sup>nd</sup> Japanese Army begins to move north
14-15 Jun	Battle Telissu – Russian counterattack defeated by success of Japanese flanking attacks, Russians retreat to Wanchialing
20 Jun	Japanese organized at Antung, Takushan, Talienwan, and Dalny.
26-27 Jun	Battle of Fenshuiling Pass – Russian forced to retreat, Japanese did not pursue Japanese 3 <sup>rd</sup> Army driven back from advancing on Port Arthur
19 Jul	Battle of Chiaotou – Russian driven back to Yushuling by Japanese frontal and flank attack round the south of Chiaotou
24 Jul	Battle of Tashihchiao – Japanese attacks failed, but Russians retreated at midnight to Anshanchan, near Haicheng
27 Jul	Close attack on Port Arthur begins, Kwangtung Peninsula isolated from rest of Liaotung Peninsula by Japanese forces
29 Jul	Kuropatkin, reinforced by the XVII Army Corps, plans attack on Japanese 1 <sup>st</sup> Army

**Appendix A: Timeline of Events of Russo-Japanese War 1904-1905**

30 Jul	Battle of Hsimucheng begins
31 Jul	Battle of Hsimucheng – Russians retreat to Haicheng when threatened by Japanese encirclement; Japanese 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Armies able to link up for march toward Liaoyang; Kuropatkin gives up plan to attack 1 <sup>st</sup> Army
03 Aug	4 <sup>th</sup> Army reaches Haicheng, 3 Japanese Armies are on a 45 mile front
04 Aug	Last outer fort north of Port Arthur capture, Japanese able to shell Russian fleet in harbor
10 Aug	Battle of Yellow Sea - Russian Fleet fails to break out of Port Arthur
14 Aug	Battle of Ulsan - Russian squadron from Vladivostok attacked, forced to return to Vladivostok after taking heavy losses
18 Aug	Japan begins preparations for converging attacks on Liaoyang
22 Aug	Kuropatkin decides to no longer fight rear-guard actions, accept battle and pass to offensive if conditions are favorable
25 Aug	Battle of Liaoyang begins
03 Sep	Russians retreat from Liaoyang, Japanese suffer heavy casualties, Russian lines of communication threatened. Japanese within 40 miles of Manchurian capital, Mukden.
05-17 Oct	Battle of Shaho – Russian tactical victory comes at great cost, Alexiev relieved, Kuropatkin put in command of all of Russian Far East, Russian forces withdraw north to Mukden
<b>1905</b>	
25-29 Jan	Battle of Sandepu – Russians surprise Japanese, but Kuropatkin inexplicably halts advance and misses opportunity to defeat Japanese Army
20 Feb – 10 Mar	Battle of Mukden – Japanese rout Russian Army, but at great cost. Japan reached their culminating point during this battle.
27-28 May	Battle of Tsushima – Japanese Navy destroys the Russian Baltic Fleet sent to free Vladivostok, Russia begins to ask for peace negotiations as a result
05 Sep	Treaty of Portsmouth signed and ended the Russo-Japanese War

Source:

Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, *The Russo-Japanese War*, Part I, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909) 150-159.

**Appendix B: Results of the Battle of Tsushima**

	Ships	Killed	Wounded	POW	Interned in Neutral Ports
Russia	34 Warships	4,830	*	5,917	1,862
Japan	3 Torpedo Boats	110	590	-----	-----

\* Many of the Russian sailors taken prisoner were wounded

Following the Battle of Mukden, the Japanese began to explore the possibility of President Roosevelt acting as a peace mediator. During the process of negotiating for peace discreetly, the Russian Baltic Fleet arrived in the East China Sea and was subsequently defeated by the Japanese Navy. "Virtually the entire Russian force was sunk or captured, and Japanese losses were inconsequential by comparison as Russia suffered the greatest naval disaster in the history of modern warfare." Following this defeat, the Russian public began to demand for peace. A Russian newspaper reported, "The Russian people have been marching to the brink of destruction but the bandages are now torn from their eyes. They will neither be led nor driven over the precipice. Let the people speak. The bureaucracy has had its say and has crowned its work with national shame and humiliation. Our only consolation in this bitter hour is the consciousness that it is not the people but the government which has suffered a defeat. Enough." On September 5, 1905, a peace treaty mediated by President Roosevelt was signed and the Russo-Japanese War ended.

Source:

\* Dennis and Peggy Warner, The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, (New York: Charterhouse, 1974), 557.

\* David Walder, The Short Victorious War: The Russo-Japanese Conflict 1904-05, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1973), 280-286.

**Appendix C: Japanese Intervention in Korea and Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)**

In 1882, following an assassination attempt of the Korean King and Queen, China offered to provide protection and the King accepted. Japan was looking for an opportunity to counter Chinese ascendancy on the Korean peninsula and would find it a few months later when their legation was attacked. Japan responded by sending troops into Korea to protect their interests. Sino-Japanese tensions built, but were temporarily cooled with the signing of the Tientsin Convention in April 1885. In the agreement, China and Japan agreed to remove their troops from Korea and respect the other's right to protect its interests in Korea. If their interests were threatened by Korean instability, they would notify the other if they decided to deploy troops. In 1894, a rebellion broke out in Korea and both China and Japan dispatched troops. Once the rebellion ended, Japan refused to remove its troops until they were confident that a lasting peace and stability was established in Korea. The Chinese replied indignantly that Japan had no right to dictate the internal affairs of Korea. The Sino-Japanese resulted from this diplomatic standoff.

The Japanese Navy quickly destroyed the numerically superior Chinese Navy to establish command of the sea. Command of the sea provided Japan with freedom of movement at such a rapid rate that the Chinese were overwhelmed and forced to capitulate. Following the Battle of Pyongyang on 15 September 1894, Japan would commence a two pronged attack, similar to what they would do during the Russo-Japanese War. As First Japanese Army advanced into Manchuria, the Second Army landed on the Liaotung Peninsula on 24 October. On 06 March 1895, the two forces combined and destroyed the Chinese Army at Tienchuangtai. With its navy destroyed

**Appendix C: Japanese Intervention in Korea and Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895)**

and army defeated, China sued for peace. The Treaty of Shimonoseki, signed on 10 April 1895 brought the hostilities to an end.

Source:

- \* Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, The Russo-Japanese War, Part I, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed, (London: Harrison and Sons, 1909), 9-33.
- \* Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear, (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 2-4.

**Appendix D: Cassini Convention 30 September, 1896**

Per the convention, Russia was permitted to construct the Trans-Siberian Railway. Chinese railways between Shan-hai-kwan and Mukden and lines between Shan-hai-kwan and Port Arthur and Talien-wan via Niu-chwang would be built in accordance with general Russian regulations. Russia agreed to, if China found it “necessary”, help finance, construct and protect, with Russian troops, the railways. If Russia financed and built the railways, they would be run by Russians with the option for China to “buy” the railways back in 15 years. To Japan, these moves were seen as a direct threat not just to them economically, but to their national defense as well. Russia was establishing a warm water port to station its ships, a railway to re-supply them as well as laying the grounds for justification of their troops remaining in Manchuria. This was in direct opposition to Japanese ambitions.

Source:

\* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 88-89.

## Appendix E: Timeline of European "Carving Up" of China

1896: Russia decides to have Trans-Siberia Railway cut across Manchuria. Agreement reached via Russo-Chinese Bank. Providing Russia with an excuse to intervene in Manchuria

1897: Germany signs a 99-yr lease on either side of Kiaochao Bay

Dec 1897: Russian fleet appears off Port Arthur

Mar 1897: Port Arthur, Talienwan (Dalny) and surrounding waters leased to Russia

- Could be extended by mutual agreement, Russia begins fortifying Port Arthur

1898: Russia begins new railway through from Harbin through Mukden to Port Arthur

- Britain signs a 99-yr lease for Hong Kong's "New Territories" and dispossesses Japan of Weihaiwei, agreeing to remain there as long as Russia occupied Port Arthur

Apr 1898: France acquires rights to Kwangchowwan

Jun 1900: Boxer Rebellion begins in response to European imperialist expansion into China

Jul 1900: US Secretary of State John Hay announced the major powers (France, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, Japan and Russia) agreed in principle to the Open Door Policy on China

### Source:

- \* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 98-101.
- \* Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear, (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 2-4.



## Appendix F: Anglo-Japanese Alliance

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902 provided Japan with the means to wage war on Russia. The Alliance made it possible for Japan to ensure that any hostilities with Russia would be free from any third party intervention. Britain and Japan agreed to come to the other parties' assistance if the belligerent party was engaged with two or more antagonists. Japan gained prestige from being aligned with the preeminent maritime power at that time. From Britain, Japan gained a political and strategic advantage. Additionally, Japan gained further access to British naval equipment, training and, most importantly fuel.

In return, Britain gained an ally to counter Russian expansion. By providing equipment, fuel and advisors, Britain was able to wage a proxy war against Russia without the commitment of vast resources that were previously engaged around the world.

Source:

\* David C Evans and Mark R. Peattie, Kaigun: Strategy, Tactics and Technology in the Imperial Japanese Navy, 1887-1941, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1997), 65-66.

## **Appendix G: Russian Demands for Departing Manchuria**

Russian demands presented to Peking required for Russian evacuation of Manchuria

1. None of the returned territory was in any way to be given to another power
2. Mongolia's system of government was not to be altered
3. No new ports or towns were to be developed or opened in Manchuria without informing the Russians
4. Foreigners serving in the Chinese government were not to exercise authority in northern Manchuria
5. The telegraph line connecting the Liatotung Peninsula with Peking was to be assured
6. On Newchwang being returned to China, the Custom's dues were to continue to be paid into the Russo-Chinese Bank
7. The rights acquired by Russian interests or Russian people were to be continued

Source:

\* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 130-135.

## **Appendix H: The Anglo-German Agreement (October 16, 1900)**

Article 1: Upheld the open door policy in China

Article 2: Disclaimed territorial designs upon China on the part of the contracting Powers

Article 3: In case of another Power making use of the complications in China in order to obtain under any form whatever such territorial advantages, the two contracting parties reserve to themselves the right to come to a preliminary understanding as to the eventual steps to be taken for the protection of their own interests in China.

Japan joined the agreement on October 29<sup>th</sup>, not as a signatory, but as an adhering State.

France, Austria, and Italy recognized all three articles.

The United States recognized the first two, but expressed itself unconcerned with the third.

Although, the signatories never agreed as to whether or not the agreement pertained to Manchuria, it was assumed by the majority of signatories, with Russia being the exception.

Source:

\* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 157-161.

**Appendix I: Russo-Japanese Agreement in Respect to Korea (April 25, 1898)**

The agreement contained three understandings:

1. The independence of Korea was assured; neither country would interfere in Korean domestic affairs.
2. There would be no appointment of military or civil advisers without discussion with the interested parties.
3. Russia agreed not to hinder Japan's development of trade with Korea.

Source:

\* Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear, (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 9.

## **Appendix J: Russo-Japanese Negotiations Over Korea/Manchuria**

July 28, 1903: Japanese Ambassador formally addresses St. Petersburg on Russian intervention into Korea

August 12, 1903: Russia agrees to view draft treaty proposed by Japan while continuing to strengthen its position in the Far East

January, 13, 1904: Japan proposes she will recognize Manchuria as being outside her sphere of influence if Russia will reciprocate with respect to Korea and requests an early response, by February 4<sup>th</sup>.

February, 4, 1904: No reply from Russia

February, 6, 1904: Japanese Ambassador leaves St. Petersburg

- Japanese citizens leave Port Arthur on a British steamer
- Russian Ambassador to Japan warns that Japan will fight if backed into a corner

### **Source:**

\* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 79-85.

\* Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear, (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 25.

## Appendix K: Mahan and Nelson on Purpose of a Navy and its Impact on the War

Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan had a profound effect on naval thought. His Influence of Seapower upon History, a collection of lectures providing justification for the increase and modernization of the U.S. Navy, influenced several nations, including Japan. Mahan believed that the primary purpose of a navy was to foster the expansion and provide protection of a nation's maritime trade.

“The necessity of a navy, in the restricted sense of the word, springs, therefore, from the existence of a peaceful shipping, and disappears with it, except in the case of a nation which has aggressive tendencies, and keeps up a navy merely as a branch of the military establishment.”

Mahan also stated, for war, “the influence of the government will be felt in its most legitimate manner in maintaining an armed navy, of a size commensurate with the growth of its shipping and the importance of the interests connected with it.”

British Admiral Horatio Nelson believed that the navy was a weapon whose sole purpose was to destroy the enemy's navy. In 1796, he wrote that he “could not help being more than commonly displeased” with the prospect of “his” navy being relegated to a support role for the army. In Nelson's view, his navy's mission was to “hunt” enemy ships “and if I find them in any place where there is a *probability* of attacking them, you may depend they shall be either taken or *destroyed* at the *risk of my Squadron*.”

Nelson's philosophy was more aggressive than Mahan's. As Mahan allowed for a strategy of denying the enemy access to the sea, Nelson actively sought out and forced the enemy to engage, despite the risks. With their attack on Port Arthur, Japan was cautious due to the impending threat posed by the arrival of the Russian Baltic Fleet. Once the Russian Far East Fleet was neutralized and the Baltic Fleet arrived in the Pacific, Japan wasted no time in destroying it. As the Japanese Army had culminated, the

risk of a naval defeat was grave to the national security and independence of Japan.

Russia would have been able to reinforce its Manchurian Army while isolating the Japanese Army. Had this happened, Japan would have had no leverage in negotiations.

Destroying the Japanese Fleet would have been the decisive victory Russia needed to regain public support for the war and Japan would have been at the mercy of Russia, barring any international intervention.

Source:

\*Alexander. Kiralfy, "Japanese Naval Strategy", in Makers of Modern Strategy, edited by Edward Mead Earle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 470.

\* Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History, (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1890), 20-25, 70-72.

**Appendix L: Mahan on Imperialism**

Mahan believed that a nation became great through the acquisition of wealth. The foundation of a nation's greatness emanates from wealth. "Wealth, as a source of civic distinction, carried with it also power in the State, and with power there went social position and consideration." To acquire this wealth and concomitant social prestige, a nation needed to acquire colonies. "Men of the past three centuries have keenly felt the value to the mother-country of colonies as outlets for the home products and as a nursery for commerce and shipping." If a nation wanted to be great, it needed to acquire colonies for their potential generation of wealth as well as the prestige associated with their possession.

Source:

\* Alfred Thayer Mahan, The Influence of Seapower Upon History, (New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1890), 48-50.



## Appendix M: Japanese Proposed Negotiations on Manchuria/Korea August 1903

### Japan Proposed:

1. A mutual engagement to respect the independence and territorial integrity of the Chinese and Korean Empires, and to maintain the principle of equal opportunity for the commerce and industry of all nations in those countries.
2. A reciprocal recognition of Japan's preponderating interests in Korea and Russia's special interests in railway enterprises in Manchuria, and of the right of Japan to take Korea, and of Russia to take in Manchuria, such measures as may be necessary for the protection of their respective interests as above defined, subject, however, to the provisions of Article 1 of this Agreement.
3. A reciprocal undertaking on the part of Russia and Japan not to impede the development of those industrial and commercial activities, respectively, of Japan in Korea and of Russia in Manchuria, which are not inconsistent with the stipulations of Article 1 of this Agreement.  
An additional engagement on the part of Russia not to impede the eventual extension of the Korean Railway into southern Manchuria so as to connect with the Easter Chinese and Shan-hai-kwan-Niu-chwang lines.
4. A reciprocal engagement that, in case it should be found necessary to send troops by Japan to Korea, or by Russia to Manchuria, for the purpose either of protecting the interests mentioned in Article 2 of this Agreement, or of suppressing insurrection or disorder liable to create international complications, the troops so sent are in no case to exceed the actual number required, and are to be forthwith recalled as soon as their missions are accomplished.
5. The recognition on the part of Russia of the exclusive right of Japan to give advice and assistance in the interest of reform and good government in Korea, including necessary military assistance.
6. This Agreement to supersede all previous arrangements between Japan and Russia respecting Korea.

### Source:

\* Kan Ichi Asakawa, The Russo-Japanese Conflict: Its Causes and Issues, (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1904), 303-304.

## Appendix N: Forces in Theater on 04 February 1904

### Leadership

Japanese Military Leaders		Russian Military Leaders	
Gen. Baron Kodama	Chief of General Staff	Admiral Yevgeny Alexeiev	Far East Viceroy
Field Marshall Oyama Iwao	CinC Manchurian Army	General Alexsei Kuropatkin	CDR, Manchurian Army
General Kuroki Tamemoto	CDR, 1 <sup>st</sup> Army	Admiral Stepan Makarov	CDR, Russian Far East (Pacific) Navy
General Oku Yasukata	CDR, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Army	LtGen Georgii Stakelberg	CDR, 1 <sup>st</sup> Siberian Corps
LtGen Nogi Maresuke	CDR, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Army	LtGen Mikhail Zasulich	CDR, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Siberian Corps
General Nodzu Maresuke	CDR, 4 <sup>th</sup> Army	LtGen Anatoly Stessel	CDR, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Siberian Corps
Vice Admiral Heichachiro Togo	CinC of the Combined Fleet of the Imperial Navy		

Japanese commanders were experienced, professional and highly capable. They had gained experience and knowledge of the terrain during the Sino-Japanese War in 1894-5. The knowledge they gained gave them the capability and confidence to overcome the Russians.

Conversely, the Russian Army commanders were less than competent. Some obtained their rank through association with high ranking members of the Russian government. Russia's most capable and respected leader, Admiral Makarov, would be killed in action outside Port Arthur. With him died any chance of Russia mounting a successful offensive campaign, either at sea or on land.

### Ground Forces

	Riflemen	Cavalry	Artillery
Russia	60,000	3,000	164
Japan	257,000	11,000	894

Although Russia's trained army stood at about 4.5 million, only a fraction of these forces were available for combat in Manchuria in 1904. By the middle of February, Russian forces would be increased to 95,000.

## Appendix N: Forces in Theater on 04 February 1904

### Naval Forces

Class	Russia	Japan
Battleship, First Class	7	6
Battleship, Second Class	0	1
Armored Cruiser	5 (3*)	8(2**)
Cruiser, First Class, protected	5 (1*)	0
Cruiser, Second Class, protected	0	12 (1***)
Cruiser, Third Class, protected (>19kts)	2	4
Cruiser, Third Class, protected (<19kts)	0	4
Cruiser, Third Class, unprotected (>19kts)	0	2
Cruiser, Third Class, unprotected (<19kts)	0	7
Torpedo gunboats	2	1
Destroyers	25	19
Sloops and gunboats	10	15
Torpedo boats, First Class	10	58
Torpedo Boats, Second Class	7	27

\* At Vladivostok

\*\* At Singapore, on passage to Japan

\*\*\* Under Construction, joined the fleet in March

### Location of Russian Navy in Far East

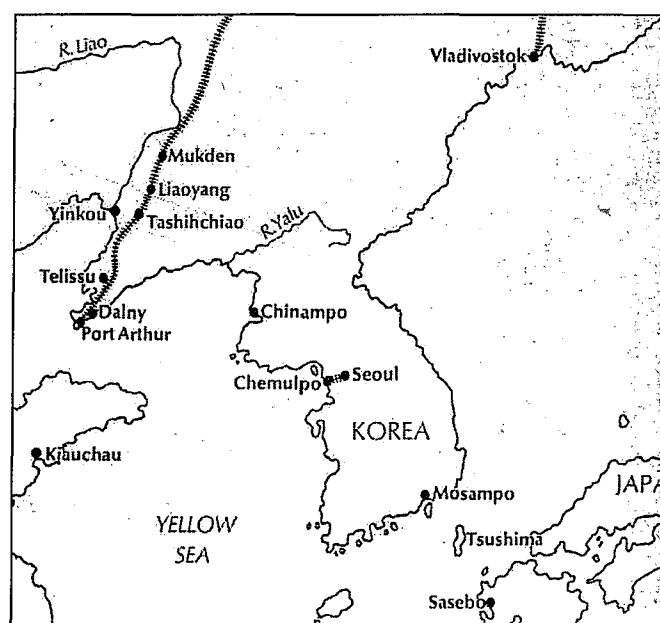
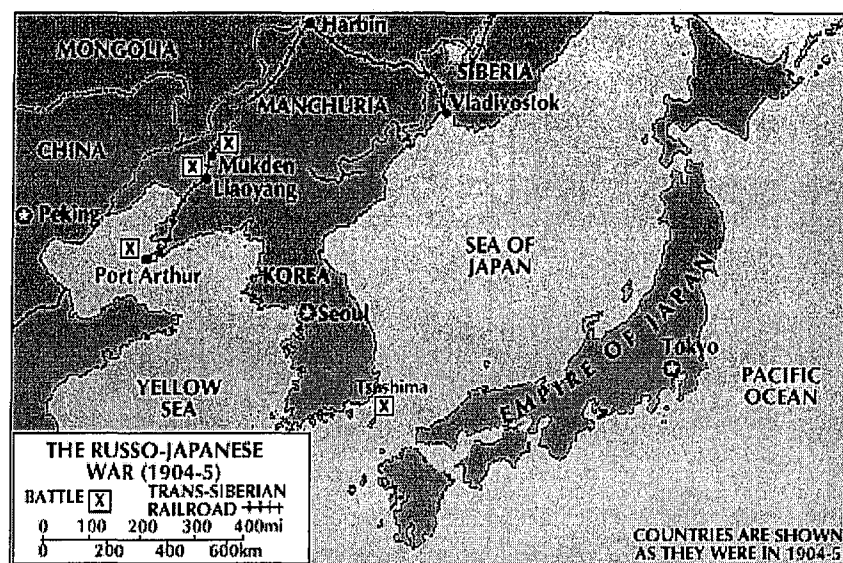
	Battleships	Cruisers	Torpedo Boats
Port Arthur	7	6	13 (antiquated)
Vladivostok	0	4	Various
Chemulpo	0	1	1 Gunboat

While the Russian Fleet was divided, disorganized and unprepared for operations in the Pacific, the Japanese Fleet had the advantage of being concentrated. The Japanese Navy used common equipment and procedures. Their six battleships and six cruisers, modern and mostly British built, were organized into squadrons by type. Their smaller frontline vessels were modern, well equipped and fast. Other ships, not as combat worthy, were assigned lesser roles commensurate with their capabilities.

#### Source:

- \* A. Kearsley, A Study of the Strategy and Tactics of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904: Up to 24<sup>th</sup> August: Illustrating the Principles of War and the Field Service Regulations (Aldershot: Gale and Polden, 1904), 13.
- \* Richard Connaughton, The War of the Rising Sun and Tumbling Bear, (London: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Inc., 1988), 20-22.
- \* Dennis and Peggy Warner, The Tide at Sunrise: A History of the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, (New York: Charterhouse, 1974), 398-399, 411-429, 494-497.
- \* David Walder, The Short Victorious War: The Russo-Japanese Conflict 1904-05, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1973), 101, 269-272.

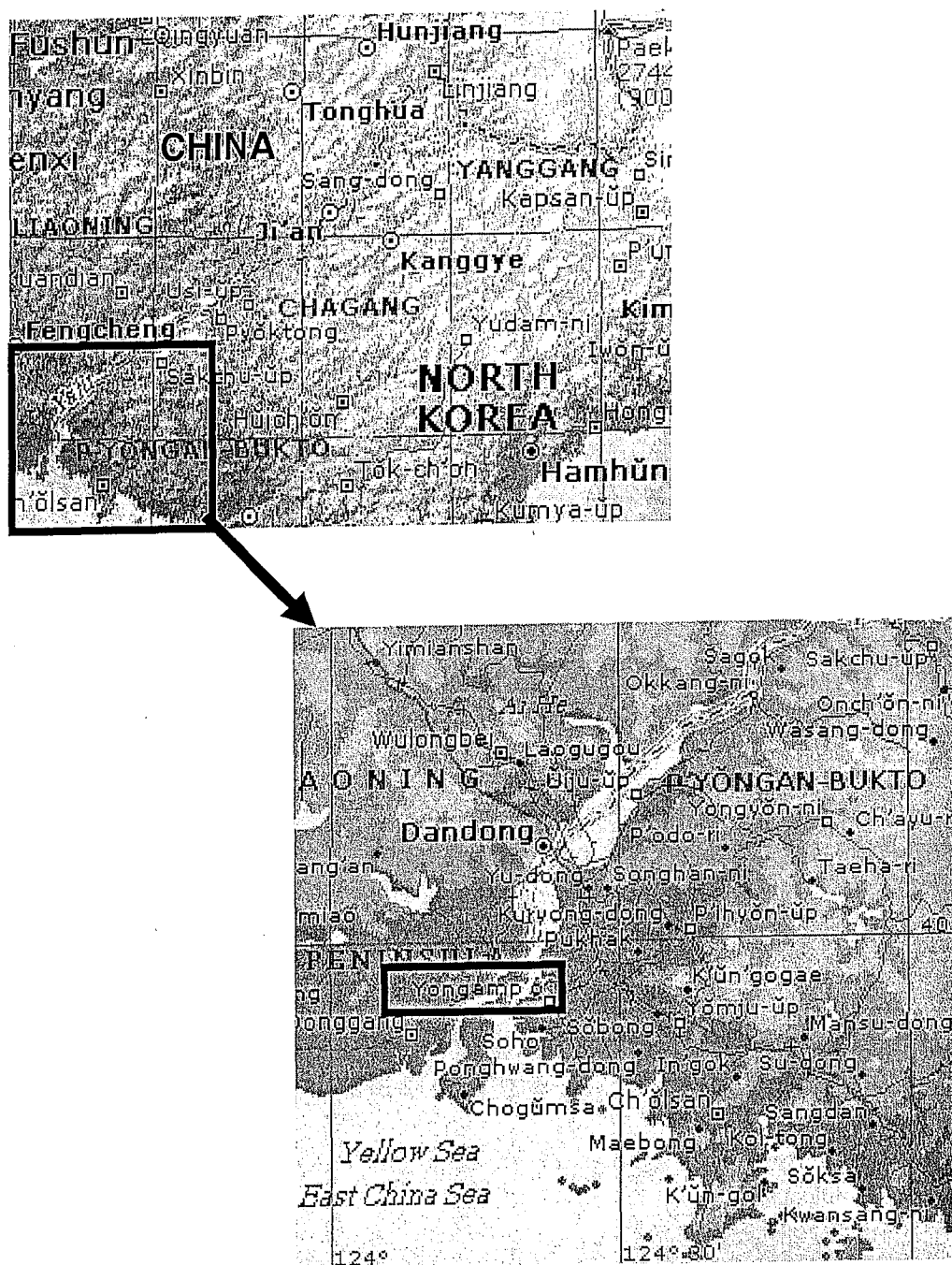
Map 1: Theater of Operations



Source:

\* J.N. Westwood, The Illustrated History of the Russo-Japanese War (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1974), 11.

Map 2: Yalu River and Yongnampo



Source:

\* MSN Encarta. <<http://encarta.msn.com>> (2008, March 28)



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